

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH

MAY 12, 2009

GAMBLING PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Gambling addiction is an increasingly pressing issue in America and around the world. Gambling problems are on the rise largely because gambling access is on the rise. The growth of the internet and online gambling have made it easier than ever to place wagers on everything from poker tournaments to horse racing. Studies indicate that: (a) easier and increased access to gambling venues is positively correlated with higher rates of problem gambling; (b) gambling problems are associated with a wide range of psychiatric, interpersonal, social, legal, and health problems, and therefore represent a serious public health concern; and (c) treatment seeking among individuals with gambling problems is low relative to disorders such as substance-related addictions and major depression, in part due to the lack of services for gambling problems and the stigma associated with gambling problems.

With the proliferation of gambling venues in Los Angeles County and surrounding areas, treatment for gambling problems and problem gamblers is more important now than ever before. This issue is particularly prevalent in the Asian Pacific Islander (API) population, as several studies have shown that API's represent a large percentage of the clientele in casinos, and the prevalence of problem or pathological gambling may be higher among APIs. Recent work has also indicated that knowledge about the issue of problem gambling is uniformly low among API and Non-API populations. This is striking given the potential increased impact of problem gambling on the API community.

The State Office of Problem Gambling is currently planning to distribute \$4 million in treatment funding that is expected to go through counties. It is imperative that Los Angeles County be prepared to leverage these potential funds for programs that properly treat this addiction.

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Molina	_____
Ridley-Thomas	_____
Yaroslavsky	_____
Antonovich	_____
Knabe	_____

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors direct the Chief Executive Officer, the Director of Public Health, and the Director of Mental Health to work with UCLA's Gambling Studies Program to plan, develop, and implement prevention and treatment strategies, including strategies to raise awareness of gambling problems and their treatment, for Los Angeles County constituents that would be appropriate prevention and treatment for problem and pathological gambling.

I, FURTHER MOVE that the Alcohol Drug Program and Administration and the Department of Mental Health to collaborate with UCLA's Gambling Studies Program to study the problem of the extent and prevalence of pathological gambling within Los Angeles County, and report back to the Board within six months. This assessment should employ data collection techniques to ensure that the limited-English proficient population in Los Angeles County will be meaningfully included in the analysis. The data will be used to direct how problem pathological gambling prevention and treatment strategies are to be implemented in Los Angeles County, and to determine if on-going funding sources are available for the creation of pathological gambling prevention programs.

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